

Depot Town Rag

Volume 19, Number 4 "All the news in one black in one month."

April
1996

SPECIAL
ISSUE:

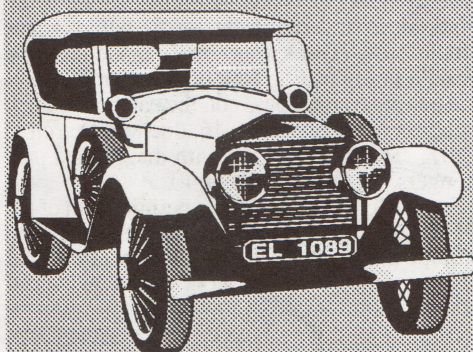
HISTORY OF
BIG WRECKS
AT THE YPSI DEPOT

100% FREE
Rag Content

A Publication of the DEPOT TOWN ASSOCIATION, INC. P.O. Box 970-235, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197-0804

**Ypsilanti's Automotive
Heritage Collection
museum chosen for August
Heritage Festival kick-off site
to honor nation's 100 years of
automotive history**

100th
year



Also open for public tours:
Ypsilanti Historical Museum
at 220 N. Huron Street
and the
Yankee Air Force Museum
at the Willow Run Airport
(phone 313-483-4030)

Efforts commemorated

DDA placed a plaque with these words on the replica of the 1893 crossing guard signal tower last month:

"In appreciation of the charm and allure created by the restoration of the Depot Town Caboose and the Depot Town Landmark Signal Tower, the Depot Town Development Authority offers heart felt thanks to the many individuals who unselfishly participated. In particular those of the Depot Town Engine Club and the Depot Town Association whose labors saw these projects completed."

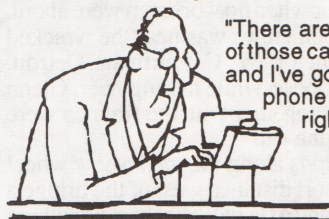
Ypsilanti's unique automotive history is featured here

-from the Auto Heritage Collection's newest brochure

- Apex Motors, which produced the ACE car from 1920-1922 was located on south River Street.
- Preston Tucker, whose family owned the Ypsilanti Machine Tool Company, developed and built the prototypes for his Tucker Torpedo here and later acquired a World War II assets plant for production of 51 units before the government shut him down.
- Henry J. Kaiser and Joseph W. Frazer purchased the gigantic Willow Run B-24 bomber plant in 1945 from the government and began production in mid-year 1946 of Kaiser and Frazer models for 1947. 1953 saw the last Kaiser cars produced at Willow Run as production was moved to Toledo, Ohio as a result of the merger of Kaiser and Willys/Overland.
- GM's Hydramatic division bought the Kaiser plant and began producing transmissions there in the winter of 1953.
- In 1955, Chevrolet began producing large special order trucks in the building which formerly housed KF engineering and the spare parts facility for the B-24 Bomber Plant. Later, this plant would be added on to several times, first for the manufacture of the Corvair from 1959 to 1969, and then for the Nova, Ventura, Omega, Skylark series of GM cars and, in 1980, the plant was converted to production of the GM X-series front-wheel-drive cars.
- Finally, the last cars produced there were the second generation Chevrolet Caprice sedans and station wagons, along with the Buick and Oldsmobile station wagons. The plant was closed in 1993.

Other examples of Ypsilanti's Automotive Heritage include

- The Ford Generator plant as it was known for many years,
- Motor State Products which produced convertible tops and hydraulic window assemblies,
- The Jim Robbins Seat Belt Company,
- Sanderson Metal Parts Company,
- The foundry at King-Seely's Central Specialty division which cast the Hudson dual carburetor and dual exhaust manifolds from 1952-1956.
- Wire wheel hubcaps, which were introduced to the mass auto market in the mid-sixties, originated at the Gar-Wood/United Metal Craft Plant here in Ypsilanti. Later it would be known as Norris Industries and was located on East Michigan Avenue. Motor Wheel Corporation purchased the Central Specialty plant in 1964 and began production of automobile brake drums and disc brake motors.
- Ypsilanti is also home to the world's last Hudson dealer, Miller Motors, which is located next to the Auto Heritage Collection and is included in the displays.



"There are only three
of those cars left on Earth,
and I've got their owners'
phone numbers
right here."

Volunteerism honored

Miller Motor's Jack Miller was award the Pioneer Award from the Ypsilanti Visitor & Convention bureau in March. Also honored were Hon's Flowers' Joe Wizauer (Volunteer of the Year Business Award), and Robert Wilson (Individual Volunteer Award)

It folks like Jack, Joe, and Robert who make this such a nice place to live and work. They are much appreciated by their neighbors.

Ypsilanti's Automotive Heritage Collection

112 E. Cross Street

in historic Depot Town

Saturday 10-4, Sunday 1-5

preserved and presented by the

Ypsilanti Historical Society

Phone: (313) 482-4990, (313) 482-5200

ANOTHER FINE MESS... 10 YEARS LATER

The Ann Arbor News, Thursday, 10 August 1939

Michigan Central traffic tied up for five hours Mile of double track uprooted as freight train leaves rails

YPSILANTI — The ticket office and baggage room of the Michigan Central Railroad station here were demolished and all traffic through Ypsilanti was delayed for approximately five hours this morning when a fast eastbound freight train was derailed and a loaded box car crashed into the depot.

Almost a mile of double track was torn up before the train stopped, and five passenger trains, including the crack westbound Wolverine, were held up. Wrecking trains from Jackson and Detroit were sent to the scene of the accident, and eastbound Train No. 42 was moved over a temporary route through the wreckage at 9:50. The other delayed trains, including the 9:14 eastbound held up at Ann Arbor, were sent through as rapidly as possible.

Tenth car jumps - No one was injured in the accident, which occurred at 5:08 a.m. when the tenth car in the 50-car through freight jumped the track as the train was entering the western city limits of Ypsilanti, but J. A. Hachey of Ann Arbor, relief telegraph operator at the station, had to run from the station platform to escape being crushed when a box car reduced part of the depot to a mass of masonry.

The train, enroute from Chicago to Niagara Falls with stops scheduled only at Niles, Jackson and Detroit, was derailed near the plant of the United Stove Co. and crossed the Huron river with one or more cars dragging on the rails and ties, the derailed cars finally halting the train at the station after wrecking the front wall of the ticket office and baggage room.

Commuters delayed - Many Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti residents who work in Detroit and commute by train were unable to get to their

work this morning because of the traffic tie-up.

The first car to leave the track was a sand gondola, on which five hoboes were riding, and the men were forced to remain with the careening car as it traveled over the ties for the entire distance, dropping wheels and trucks along the route. All of the men were shaken and frightened, but none was injured.

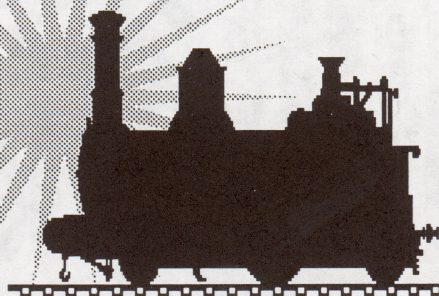
A loaded steel box car broke out of the string of cars as the train approached the station, tore out the front of the ticket office and tipped over on its side less than a foot from the wall of the office of the American Railway Express Co. A carload of eggs in front of the sand car was wrecked and partly overturned.

The train was in charge of Conductor W. C. Kurtman of Detroit and Engineer Glenn West of Jackson.

Four cars off rails - Four cars, a refrigerator car, two box cars and a sand car, were off the rails as the train approached the station. There, the refrigerator car, its side stove in, halted a few feet from a main road crossing. The box car behind it — labeled "Corrosive liquid - handle with care," overturned on the platform, its wheels gone. The sand car, its wheels also missing, lay on the roadbed, and the fourth car halted diagonally across the tracks. Trainmen said all cars were loaded.

Both the westbound Wolverine and eastbound Motor City Special, crack Michigan Central trains, were delayed by the wreck, and another eastbound train was held up west of Ypsilanti, while a third was held at Ann Arbor.

Repair crews said the accident apparently had been caused by collapse of one of the box car trucks.



Broken truck side - While exact cause of the accident cannot be definitely determined, there was evidence, in form of broken parts strewn along the track, which indicated a broken truck side. A lower center section of a truck frame at the side of the track near the Railroad street crossing showed where the trouble first started. What looked like an old break apparently let the framework give way a few feet south of the crossing and for some distance there were skid marks to a point where one set of wheels was thrown clear of the train when it came into contact with a siding switch.

As wheel were torn from beneath the car a coupling was apparently broken, a part being found near the Forest Avenue street crossing, a quarter mile from the depot where the cars finally left the track, and fully a quarter mile past where first signs of trouble were found. Along this route of more than a half mile there was considerable road be damage, rails being torn loose and requiring repair before trains could pass. Track was finally made passable after a tie-up lasting four hours, 28 minutes.

The first train to pass son the eastbound track after the wreck was No. 16, due into Detroit at 7:07. The train, loaded with disgruntled passengers, left Ypsilanti at 9:40.

Frank McElroy, Detroit, superintendent of the Michigan division, estimated the damage to equipment at \$3,000 thorough he said the total damage, including the depot would far exceed that amount.

Times at 5:08 - Police, who got their first report from an alert telephone operator, time the crash at 5:08 a.m. (EST.) the operator told them:

"The phone is off the hook at the depot, and there's no answer." The telephone had been buried under the pile of bricks.

It was about two hours later that the wrecking crew arrived and started clearing the tracks. While the road was blocked several trains were routed around Ypsilanti over the Wabash lines.

Previous accident

This is not the first time an unruly freight car has left the track near the depot. Jan. 21, 1939, a car broke from a fast freight and smashed through the wall of the Ollett restaurant in the corner of the old Masonic Block. Mrs. Ollette had just come into the room and still wore her heavy felt hat, which probably save her life. As it was, a deep cut on her head and other injuries kept her in the hospital for three months. A woman passing on the sidewalk was even more severely injured, one leg being crushed.

What remained of the building was removed.

Ypsilanti Daily Press, 10 August 1939

Totally demolish depot

Side ripped from building as box cars leave tracks

Several lives endangered in wreck early this morning; broken truck side believed cause of accident

Good fortune marks pile-up, employees escape with lives

Damage to rail equipment estimated at \$3,000; building, merchandise loss not determined

One side ripped out, the office at the Michigan Central depot today was a ruin and at the same time a monument to good fortune. A broken truck side is supposed to have been the immediate cause, throwing several cars of a passing freight from the track at a point directly in front of the depot. As they swayed and broke away from the rest of the train the front wall of the office was wiped out.

Marks along the right of way indicate that the first wheel left the track west of Forest avenue, several hundred yards west of the depot. Good fortune started at the bridge when the river was safely crossed and continued at the depot when there chanced to be no one in the path of the cars which were running wild.

If the cars had left the track on the railroad bridge, as railroad officials pointed out, there would probably have been a pile-up in the river below with more damage than at the depot.

The accident occurred a few minutes after 5 o'clock, an hour when no workmen were about. None of the train crews was near the wrecked cars, the conductor, W. C. Kurtman, Detroit, being in the caboose, while the engineer, Glenn West, Jackson, together with the firemen were safe in the engine cab.

Ties several rods along the track show wheel marks and a short distance west of the bridge a pair of wheels and axle indicate the point where one end of the car was let down onto the rails probably breaking the coupling, but leaving the damaged cars to be pushed on by momentum of those behind to the depot where they plowed through the office.

The damaged freights were loaded with eggs, sand, and merchandise for shipment to Detroit, Hamilton, Ont., and Toronto.

The runaway car causing the most damage was loaded with corrosive liquid.

WRECKS' EPILOGUE:

Ypsilanti Daily Press, Friday, 11 August 1939

Repairs started on depot, tracks cleared

New roof, new front planned; work to be finished next week

"At least there will be a touch of renovation," commented a bystander today as work of repairing the Michigan Central Depot was started.

Hope had been expressed that the old building might be replaced, but instead of any such word there came an order to repair the roof and replace the ticket office wall which was torn out Thursday morning when four cars of a through freight left the track and crashed through it.

The work is to be completed within a few days, about a week, employees predicted, and the station will appear much as it did before the accident, with the exception that the tower will be missing. That old mark of architectural grandeur was converted into a heap of debris during the cleanup process Thursday.

Tracks have been repaired and the grounds cleared so that little trace of the accident is discernable today, other than marks left on ties along the lines by the broken truck side, which caused the wreck, and the derailed wheels.

Cost of repairing the ticket office will depend somewhat upon the amount of material that can be salvaged to advantage, but an estimate today places the property loss at \$3,000.

Work of checking tickets and records that might have been necessary was avoided by their location on a side of the office that was not damaged, George H. Allward, night agent, commented today. Incidentally he said, he wasn't shedding any tears over the fact that the wreck occurred on his night off.

Ypsilanti Daily Press, 21 August 1939

Railroad depot nearly repaired Workmen finishing roof, plan to plaster Tuesday

Repairs on the Michigan Cenral depot begun directly afater the building was wrecked by a derailed freight train Aug. 10 are nearing completion today.

Workmen are finishing the roof today and the plastering of the waiting room is scheduled for completion Tuesday.

The depot building was for many years counted the handsomest railroad structure between Detroit and Chicago. It was built 70 years ago, largely through the efforts and financial aid of Benjamin Follett, banker, manufacturer, builder and social leader in the city during the fifties and sixties, whose spacious home occupied the block between Oak and Maple St. across from the depot. Originally the depot was two stories high with a tall tower than ballooned at the top like an old-time locomotive smoke-stack. For some years the station agent lives upstairs.

In May, 1910, fire, presumed from an engine spark, caught in the top and burned so much that the entire upper story was cut off and the tower shortened by the railroad authorities. The fire destroyed records and folders of many years that had been stored in the upper story.

Dateline: Depot Town

A Neighborhood Forgotten by Time (and Life and Newsweek)

Apartment renovation (gray area)	open patio (58)	Sidetrack Grill 56	former Depot Exchange 54	Private residence 52	Richard Reid's Hair Station 50	Hon's Flowers 48	46
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Apartments to appear over Sidetrack Grill

They threw their poor mother out into the streets! At least that's what it could look like from Nancy French's point of view. The office where she does the books for daughter and son, Linda and Dave French, just got too filled up with plaster dust for her to continue there and she's taken her bookwork to cleaner climes.

Work continues on the second and third floors above the Sidetrack Grill and the former Depot Exchange as earlier apartments and the home of Camp Photo are gutted and dumped out the chute to a giant dumpster behind the buildings. Four totally new apartments will grace that unique location when the work is done.

Wrapping living spaces around that corner is certainly a big step for this block where summer café-sitters often wonder about the overhead hints of former units before the train wreck of 1929. Floors, wall dividers, and stairways are still evident above what used to be #58 East Cross Street. Sidetrack's #56 address wraps around that site and the Depot Exchange #54 property (also owned by the Frenches) embraces both those corner spaces.

Earliest demolition last month found the old elevator at the rear of the building still intact, operated by leather straps that would certainly never pass today's OSHA standards. That went down the chute. An all-flat-black-painted space in the windowless center of one of the units indicated it had something to do with the photographic processes of the historic Camp Photo company which made the first - and most famous - composite school photos for American high schools. All that went down the chute.

It's gone now and construction is under way to create four of the most spacious and interesting apartment units ever seen in the tradition of 'loft living' in the upper floors of this historic district. No completion date has been announced.

Market Views & Interviews: Art on Board

-Judy Andrews

Little did art photographer, Carol Dohn (alias Carol Courtney-Dane) know that, after putting in her student time at EMU, 20 years hence she would land right back in the heart of Ypsilanti doing what she loves best.

Two years ago Carol became a vendor at the Farmers' Market bringing with her the splendor of the great outdoors. On her numerous camping trips along our lake shores she has captured the beauty of our fair state, lighthouses, cottages and bungalows, winter scenes at Tahquamenon Falls, vivid fall colors from the UP, and wildflowers found along the wayside. Looking into Carol's photographs is like taking a mini-vacation.

For a while Carol had done paintings on rocks and pieces of wood she had collected, but photography gradually won out as her favorite art form because it was a lot easier to carry a camera and film than all the paraphernalia that goes along with painting.

Carol is at the Farmers' Market most Wednesdays and Saturdays Page 3 DTA, April 1996

Under new management

Marian Reid is the new owner of Hon's Flowers and previous owner, Joe Wizauer, is staying on as the successful flower shop's 'star employee' for much of the next year as he edges into retirement.

Talks resume on depot parking

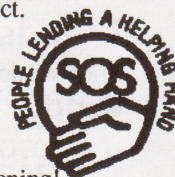
City officials have had one more meeting with Conrail regarding the open space north of the abandoned Michigan Central depot at Ypsilanti.

Once the site of the famed MCRR Depot Gardens, a greenhouse, and the steam engines' water tank, the land has been empty for many years, often holding overflow parking from August's Ypsilanti Heritage Festival.

Many potential restaurant developers have lusted over that space to provide the necessary parking for their dream of such an enterprise, but little progress was ever made.

The most recent talks with the railroad indicate a "one time window" of opportunity to purchase this space for overflow parking, especially for business employees. Many speculate the trackside location would not be suitable for building or other development and are eager to add the space to the already existing public parking spaces in the district.

SOS Community Crisis Center seeks volunteers



You can help just by listening!

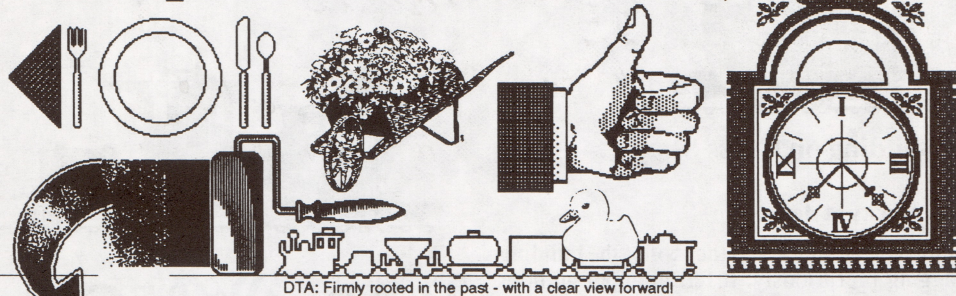
If you've been looking for a way to reach out, SOS Community Crisis Center can help you connect with others in our community. For over 25 years, SOS has provided free crisis services, referrals, housing assistance, short term counseling and advocacy for individuals and families in need.

You can help a homeless family find shelter, gather food for a hungry child, or be a listening ear for a lonely senior. It's a great way to learn more about your community and to truly make a difference in someone else's life.

No previous experience is necessary; SOS will provide all the training you need. Most positions require a three- to six-month commitment. Volunteer training begins in April 1996.

Contact Katy Mattingly at 485-8730.

Depot Town Association, Inc.



DTA 21 March 1996

- **Minutes of February** approved.
- **Treasury report** approved.

Request for reimbursement for 1995 weed removal approved.

Committee Reports:

• **DDA** recently discussed present budget. \$22,000 to be reserved for land purchase for area parking. Negotiations underway with Conrail for land acquisition. Bike racks are ready to be assemble. Members are working on job description for the area's gardener.

• **Rag report:** Articles for issue discussed. Approval for research money for James Thomas Mann, who digs for material for *The Rag*, discussed and given.

• **Farmers' Market Advisory:** New signs for Farmers' Market in place. Coming events include a silent auction on 6 April.

Unfinished Business:

• **Pancake Breakfast update:** DTA will sponsor a pancake breakfast on 5 May. Volunteers from DTA signed up at March meeting.

• **Bylaws committee** now has completed all proposed changes. Members will receive these changes. Vote on proposed changes to take place at April's meeting of the DTA.

• **Rubber Ducky Race** is in the works for this year's Heritage Festival. DTA, along with Friends of Ypsilanti (Police) will sponsor the race. It is a financial agreement of 50%/50% on the part of the organizations. Dave French stated that start-up cost money needed. \$500 approved for this.

• **Flowers for the planters** discussed for spring planting. A budget of \$600 approved for flowers.

New Business:

• **Visitors' Guide:** Lynda Hummel presented information on the new *Visitors Guide* for Washtenaw County. This guide will replace the individual guides for each city. A new photo of Depot Town for the *Guide* was discussed, and Lynda stated that it could be done. Distribution of the *Guide* planned for VCB, hotels, Welcome Centers, and universities. First publishing of 100,000 planned. Deadline for advertising in the *Guide* is April 10.

• **Ypsilanti's Sourdough Bakery** under new ownership. Looking for volunteers and customers. They are planning a fund-raiser for the bakery in late May, says Matt Champagne. Bakery is open from 5A.M.-5P.M., M-F with fresh bread ready at about 12 noon or 1P.M. each day bakery is open.

• **Hospitality Committee:** Charlotte from Me 'N' My Sisters volunteered to head the Hospitality Committee to see that DTA members receive congratulations, condolences, sympathies, or get well wishes from the DTA. If you know of a member who has had a baby, had a hospital stay, etc., please contact Charlotte.

• **Fundraising Auction:** Steve Gross presented his idea to have an auction to raise money for a project of DTA's choice. He then volunteered his talents to call the auction. Members approved the idea and will contact Steve concerning further plans.

• **Civil War Gardens:** The Kovalaks who own the Depot were approached concerning this idea. However, at the present time they are not interested. The idea has been tabled.

• **Clock Tower:** Bill French presented preliminary information on a twenty-foot, four-sided clock tower for the Depot Town area. The clock and landscaping would require approximately \$45,000. Ideas for raising the money included corporate sponsorship as well as DDA involvement. DTA members approved idea of selling bricks for area landscaping. Bricks with sponsor's name would sell for \$100 each. More information to come.

• **Heritage Festival 50/50 raffle:** Linda French will approach Heritage Festival concerning this proposal.

• **Ypsi PRIDE Week** looking for volunteers to beautify area on 18 May. Come to Depot Town dressed to work. Bring gardening and/or cleaning tools if you have them.

• **Public Parking signs:** Dave French to check with City concerning signage for public parking.

Best Yet: to all involved in getting out the new **Depot Town brochures:** designers, planners, volunteers, and to Carol and Loren Hansen. You should see the brochures throughout Depot Town, as well as hotels, VCB, Chamber, etc.

• Best Yet standing ovation to the recipients of the 5th Annual Ypsilanti Area Visitors and Convention Bureau's Volunteers. **Volunteer of the Year Individual Award** - Robert Wilson. Congratulations to Depot Town's Joe Wizauer (Volunteer of the Year Business Award, Hon's Flowers) and Jack Miller (Pioneer Award, Miller Motors). We are proud of you.

Next meeting: 18 April 1996 at 6P.M. at Renewed Interest Antiques.



to vote on the proposed bylaws change in April



THE DEPOT TOWN RAG

A publication of the Depot Town Association, Inc. a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation dedicated to preserving the unique character of the neighborhood and to the enhancement of its business climate.

-Tom Dodd, editor

The Depot Town Association, Inc.

David French, president

P.O. Box 970-235

Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197-0804

The Depot Town Rag

Tom Dodd, editor

1680 Cliffs Landing

Ypsilanti, Michigan 48198-7305

Depot Town Association 1996 officers:

President - David French,

Sidetrack, Frog Island Brewing Co

Vice president (president elect) -

Sandy Hoag, Remington/Walker

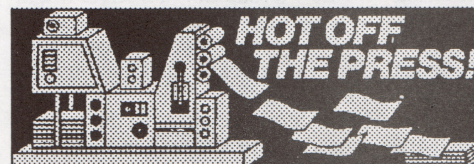
Secretary - Judy Julie,

Renewed Interest Antiques

Treasurer -

Carol Clare, Ypsilanti City Hall

The Association meets on the third Thursday of every month at 6 P.M. in Renewed Interest Antiques, 33 East Cross Street. All interested parties are welcome to attend and participate.



The district's newest promotional brochure went on the streets after the Association's last monthly meeting. Thanks to the art work and organization of the McKeevers (mother and daughter), the four-fold pamphlet was final-folded at the March meeting as DTA members deliberated neighborhood business at Remington/Walker Design Center.

An artful drawing of the Crossing Guard Tower is featured on the cover, while the inside is a bird's eye view of the block with every current business featured.

Local businesses will distribute copies, but most will be handled by the Ypsilanti Visitor & Convention Bureau beyond the county lines. Look for them, too, at the Ypsilanti Marriot.

DTA thanks all the neighbors who helped in its production -- and the neighbors thank DTA for this long-needed publication.

Happy Easter
from

Standard Printing

35 E. Cross Street • Ypsilanti, Michigan

Located in Historic Depot Town

See you in Church on Good Friday!

THE CRASH OF 1929

Ypsilanti Daily Press, Monday, 21 January 1929

M.C. Freight Wrecks Building

Derailed Box Car Crashes Into Cadwell Building on Cross St.

M.C. Officials to Investigate Cause

Lumber-filled car, near end of long freight, leaves tracks at depot

Three people were injured, one seriously, when a Michigan Central freight car was derailed at the depot this morning and careened into the Cadwell store at the intersection of Cross St. and River Blvd., wrecking the building.

The injured are:

Mrs. Laura Kelsey, 18, broken right collar bone, lacerated right leg and badly torn muscles; scalp wounds.

Mrs. Bert Ollett, bad scalp wounds, nervous shock.

Bert Ollett, minor bruises and shock.

The car, filled with lumber, was 12th from the end of an 85-car east-bound freight. It apparently was derailed just west of the depot, and as it passed, Fred Beck, baggage man, saw the trucks were off the track and endeavored to signal the engineer to stop. Before the train could be brought to a halt, however, the car broke its coupling, lurched across the Cross St. Intersection and crashed into the restaurant on the first floor, operated by Mr. and Mrs. Ollett. Mrs. Kelsey, who was standing on River St., at the intersection, waiting for the freight to pass, was apparently hit by the truck, which was torn off the car. She was knocked unconscious.

Only two in building

Mr. and Mrs. Ollett were alone in the restaurant, Mrs. Louis Cadwell, the owner, who lives on the second floor, had left the building only a few moments before and was going to her garage back of the stores, when she heard the crash. She rushed to the street to find the entire east wall caved in, her household effects

strewn in the street, and the roof of the building sagging precariously. It fell in about an hour after the accident, leaving only the Cross St. wall standing, and it was torn down soon afterward.

Only a few people were on the street at the time the crash occurred. Fire Chief A. H. Miller, who was waiting for the freight to pass, took charge of rescue work, calling the ambulance at once. Police were immediately notified, and kept the crowds back from the dangerously sagging roof of the demolished building.

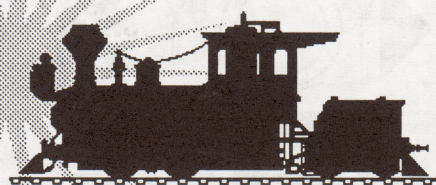
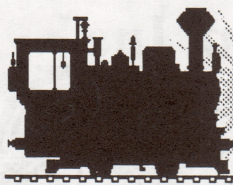
Wreck cleared away

John Prehn, Detroit, conductor of the freight which passed through the city at 9:10, called the wrecking crew and notified M.C. officials in Detroit. In less than a half hour the tracks were cleared and traffic could pass Cross St. The River Street gates were broken, however, and police watched the crossing.

The accident appeared to have been caused by some defect in the truck of the car which left the tracks as others had passed over the rails with no difficulty. Trucks were off the third car behind it, and the freight was finally brought to a stop about 1,000 feet from where the car had been derailed, but this car remained in line, and on the tracks. The derailed car, trucks torn off by the impact, lay in the center of River Blvd., its load of lumber protruding out the end.

Victims to recover

At Beyer Hospital this afternoon it was stated that Mr. and Mrs. Ollett were not in a serious condition, but that Mrs. Kelsey was suffering, and her condition more serious.



TRAIN WRECKS SEPARATED IN LOCAL HISTORY

Too often, current Depot Towners seem to lump together the two famed train wrecks which have occurred at this crossing. Sitting at Sidetrack Grill's outdoor patio this summer, many speculate as to what happened there - and when. With train wrecks again in the popular news around the U.S., it is appropriate that we at least get our own history straight down in Ypsi's depot district. The results of this month's digging by James Thomas Mann certainly make clear the differences in the wrecks which closed their decades: 1929 and 1939.

Disasters at the MCRR depot at Ypsilanti

- **May 1910:** Fire destroys upper story and tower of MCRR depot at Ypsilanti
- **January 21, 1929:** Derailed car demolishes end of commercial block
- **August 10, 1939:** Train wreck caves in side of depot.

Ypsilanti Daily Press

Tuesday, 22 January 1929

Building wreck guarded, debris removed today

Brake beam thought responsible; corner may not be rebuilt

Detectives and city police guarded the wreckage of the Cadwell building all night Monday, following the crash which Monday morning demolished the building. Railroad officials were in the city during the day to investigate the accident.

City officers were detailed to duty at the depot immediately after the accident, to keep crowds back and prevent further accidents when the roof fell and Cross St. wall was taken down. The dangerous district was roped off, and by night, debris was well cleared away.

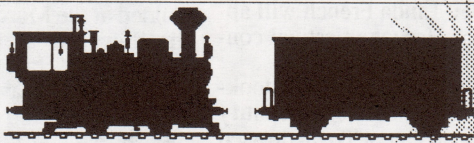
Rumors to the effect that the Olletts' son was buried in the building proved false when Mr. and Mrs. Ollett both stated they were alone when the crash came, and when he later came to the Beyer Hospital, after learning of the accident. He could not be located at school immediately after the crash, and fear was expressed

that he might have been in the restaurant.

M.C. officials here - Robert E. Laidlaw, Detroit, division superintendent; Robert Turney, trainmaster, Detroit; George Prahm, trainmaster, Ann Arbor; William Trauttfitter, roadmaster, Jackson; and the claim agent, assistant claim agent and assistant superintendent of buildings, were all here. The opinion was expressed that a brake beam on the freight car dropped, derailling the car.

Mr. and Mrs. Bert Ollett and Mrs. Laura Kelsey, who were injured in the crash, are all better today, and hospital authorities expressed the opinion Mrs. Kelsey's injuries would not prove as serious as first feared.

Mrs. Louis Cadwell, the owner, in undecided whether to rebuild. The opinion has been expressed that the city should purchase the corner for street purposes.



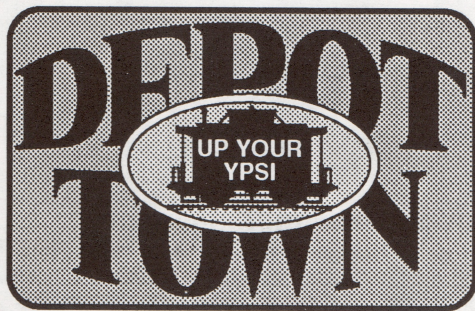
Ypsilanti



PEOPLE RESTORING IMAGE & DEVELOPING THE ENVIRONMENT

Saturday, 18 May

D7A, page 5, April 1996



Ypsilanti's FARMERS' MARKET

April events:

6 - Spring Crafts Fair

Crafts, flowers, + holiday foods

13 - Home Herb Gardens

Plants, books, information + more!

20 - Earth Day '96

Activities and projects for all ages

27 - Kids' Spot crafts

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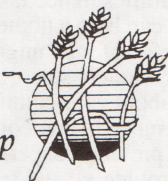
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A Depot Town SAMPLER

A living museum

Back when more optimistic folks really used to think somebody would turn the old depot into a restaurant, they would leave those depressing meetings on the topic saying, "Well, we could always turn it into a museum." But that never worked out either. Somehow, they had the dream of a local model railroad club installing a zillion miles of tiny track and replicating the route from Detroit to Chicago with a scaled down replica of raising the flag at Iwo Jima in the background. It never happened.

Then Tom Conway installed his auto collection in the old fire hall at the top of the hill and called it a museum and we all lined up at Festival time to see his cars and marvel at his good taste and reconstructive craftsmanship.

When the little factory at the district's eastern boundary turned up for sale, still more visionaires saw this as a space for showing a 'Made in Ypsi' theme and focused on the cars emulated in issues here and in the recent series of the *Press/News*. It certainly gave us something to think about, since many of us seemed to remember more than we ever knew in the first place. We're not only historic; we're creative.

Ann Arbor folks like to walk through Depot Town and wonder if we'll soon put the whole place under a dome or move it to Greenfield Village since we're so quaint and authentic. They'd probably like to see their Street Art Fairs and Springtime Nazis come over here, too, just so they could get some peace and quiet.

Somehow, local folks in Ypsi seem to take all that historical hoopla for granted, since they can remember when most of those cars were new and the stuff in the antique stores down here looks an awful lot like what they're still using at home but didn't realize was historically important. Museums seem to be the kind of thing we are supposed to look at when we're on vacation or that we take out-of-town relatives to when they're visiting here. They give us something to talk about and Uncle Joe can tell us 'how things used to be.'

Depot Towners can always tell a 'first-timer' family as they walk down our sidewalks. They look up at the building cornices and they point at things. Sometimes we wish they'd ask us something about Demetrius Ypsilanti so we could make up stories for them, but they're too polite and cautious. Maybe they're on the way to the Historical Museum to get the real facts.

History just doesn't seem like the stuff of our old school textbooks when we live with it every day, but that's certainly what it is. And, best of all, if we tell the same story often enough, maybe it'll become history later on -- and somebody will put it into a museum somewhere, sometime, and we'll all become famous just like Andy Warhol predicted. Only, in Depot Town, the fame seems to last a lot longer than fifteen minutes! At least it seems longer down here. Maybe we're on to something, after all.

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